

GRAPESVINE

VISITACION VALLEY

NUMBER 94

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

MAY 1994

An Emergency Response Team for Visitacion Valley



Valley residents spent a recent Saturday in an outdoor meeting of the Neighborhood Emergency Response Team (NERT). Sponsored by the S.F. Fire Department, NERT operates much like Civil Defense units of the 1950s, offering training in preparedness and team response, including basic skills most commonly used in disasters. In the event of a disaster of any kind, NERT mobilizes to assist the residents of their neighborhood.

Local NERT members pictured above are Christina Batiste, Jan Brown, Gene Lee, Howard Phillips, Bill Threadgill, Larry Zabo and Vince Gagliardo, a representative from the Office of Emergency Services.

Anyone can be a part of NERT. Those interested in joining one of the training classes can call Frank Lucier of the SFFD at 861-8000. Classes cost \$25, but are well worth it. Imagine being able to

help not only yourself, but your family and friends, should the unthinkable happen here.

Next meeting of the Visitacion Valley NERT group is scheduled for Thursday, May 12, 6:30 p.m. at 66 Raymond Ave. Everyone is invited to attend, whether NERT trained or not. NERT will also have a booth at the Visitacion Valley Festival on Raymond Ave. between Bayshore Blvd. and Alpha St. on Saturday, May 21.

VVMS Appeals U.S. District Court To Halt Reconstitution Process

Both the staff and principal of Visitacion Valley Middle School (VVMS) have appealed Judge William H. Orrick, U.S. District Court, to reject SFUSD's recommendation for its reconstitution and allow the District more time to reevaluate its process for increasing the school's academic achievement.

A committee of experts recommended the District replicate the success of six originally-targeted Consent Decree schools which were reconstituted in 1984 with new staffs and select students. VVMS is one of three schools chosen for reconstitution in the coming months as SFUSD continues its focus on reshuffling low-achieving campuses.

Increasing academic achievement of all SFUSD students is the primary goal of the Consent Decree, with an emphasis on both African American and Hispanic students. But recently released results of the 1993 California

Learning Assessment System (CLAS) indicate VVMS students ranked higher in reading and writing skills than students in about half of the City's 17 other middle schools, with VVMS African American students surpassing the District and State averages in those subjects.

VVMS African American students scored higher than those in a majority of SFUSD middle schools. VVMS Hispanic students also performed better in their reading skills than District and State averages.

When comparing CLAS achievement scores of VVMS students with scores of other targeted Phase I Consent Decree middle schools, average scores of VVMS students were equal to Dr. Martin Luther King's in reading and surpassed MLK in writing. Compared to other Phase 2 schools like itself, VVMS also scored higher in all areas than James Lick and Potrero Hill.

Consumers Urged to Protest Ticket Service Charge Antitrust Settlement

Outraged by a sweetheart deal arranged by attorneys representing California ticket purchasers in an antitrust class action lawsuit against BASS and Ticketmaster, one of the plaintiffs and Consumer Action urged consumers to protest the proposal settlement in court on May 6.

The lawsuit concerns high service fees, such as the \$8 to \$18 fees charged by Ticketmaster for Barbra Streisand tickets in San Jose and the \$8 fee charged for Pink Floyd tickets in Oakland, as well as other anti-consumer practices.

According to a public notice ordered by San Francisco Superior Court Judge Richard Figone, the proposed settlement provides \$750,000 in attorney fees and requires Ticketmaster and BASS to distribute tickets to the public worth an estimated \$1.5 million.

"The settlement does not return a penny to the millions of ticket buyers who paid sky-high service fees to BASS and Ticketmaster," said Dee Cravens, who sued the ticketing giants two years ago. "And no ceiling has been placed on ticket service charges,

which have escalated dramatically since the lawsuit was filed."

When Cravens filed his suit in June 1992, "ticket service charges were about \$5 per ticket, plus an additional \$2.65 transaction charge," he said. "Now service charges are as high as \$18 per ticket."

Cravens, director of corporate marketing for Radius in San Jose, said attorneys for the class "sold us down the river, without a ticket" because they failed to press for reform of BASS and Ticketmaster's practices and compensation for the class.

"This class action should have produced \$50 to \$75 million in refunds to consumers who purchased tickets from BASS and Ticketmaster during the last six years," said consumer attorney Tom Jenkins. "The proposed settlement is a sham, and it will be a shame if the court approves it on May 6."

Jenkins said the settlement also should have resulted in a cap on service fees and contained a provision making at least 30 percent of the tickets to an event available to the general public through venue box offices with no service charges.

HVP Food Labeling Creates Healthier Consumer Choices

If you haven't peered into your pantry lately, you may be surprised to learn that many food products are already sporting the new label mandated by the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act (NLEA) of 1990.

NLEA regulations, which become effective May 8, will assist consumers in making more informed food choices by requiring specific nutrition information on food labels, as well as a complete listing of product ingredients. The latter information may be especially helpful to those who must avoid certain foods due to sensitivities to selected ingredients.

One such ingredient that must be listed more thoroughly is hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP), a significant source of meat-like flavor in soups, gravies and other products.

HVPs are generally recognized as safe (GRAS) ingredients, prepared by using food grade acid or enzymes to chemically digest proteins from soy meal, wheat gluten, corn gluten or other food sources.

In May 1993, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a regulation requiring that manufacturers disclose the food source of HVP, such as soy, corn or wheat, so that persons who are allergic to such foods can avoid them.

In addition, FDA has proposed requiring the parenthetical listing of the phrase "contains glutamate."

During the process of manufacturing

HVP, proteins are broken down into their component amino acids. Glutamate is one of the many amino acids naturally present in these protein sources, becoming free glutamic acid when hydrolyzed and thereby imparting its flavor-enhancing effect.

A small number of people who believe they are sensitive to monosodium glutamate (MSG) have reported symptoms after consuming HVP. These claims are based on anecdotal reports and have not been confirmed through double-blind challenges.

Some scientists believe such sensitivities may be due to the protein source used to produce the HVP, rather than the naturally-occurring glutamate.

"Sources such as soy and wheat are well known causes of food intolerances such as celiac disease," said Steve Taylor, Ph.D., professor and head of food science and technology at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

"Adverse reactions could occur in sensitive consumers following the ingestion of soy, wheat or other proteins that are incompletely hydrolyzed."

The amount of glutamate contributed by HVP is minor in most food products. Furthermore, since free glutamate is present in virtually all foods, it would be difficult for persons to consume a glutamate-free diet.

"This unusual proposal to list a specific amino acid component of HVP would establish a precedent to list other components of ingredients on the label of foods," added Taylor. "In the end,

it would clutter the ingredient label, making it more difficult for consumers to identify essential information, such as the source of HVP."

In June 1992, the American Medical Association Council on Scientific Affairs concluded that it is not sound regulatory policy to distinguish between added glutamate and the naturally-occurring glutamate in HVP for product labeling regulations.

FDA is expected to issue a final regulation on the parenthetical listing of glutamate sometime this summer.

City Guides to Lead May Walking Tours

Come May, San Francisco boasts some of the best weather of the year! Almost every day you can count on the brightest of sunshine and the bluest of skies - perfect weather for shaking off the winter blahs by taking a free guided tour in everyone's favorite city.

Join a trained S.F. City Guide for an adventure afoot - up close and personal in one of the City's famous, or infamous neighborhoods. A group of more than 185 volunteers, City Guides is a program of the Friends of the S.F. Public Library - and this year's City Guide schedule offers almost 40 different walks with more than 100 tour events, including: Art Deco Marina; Literary North Beach; Noe Valley Victorians; Downtown Roof Gardens and Open Spaces; Chinatown; Pacific Heights Mansions; Glen Park; Suto Forest; and behind the scenes at the Sheraton Palace Hotel.

Free schedules are available at all S.F. branch libraries as well as the Convention and Visitors Bureau Visitors' Center in Halladie Plaza. A schedule can also be obtained by sending a stamped, self-addressed business-sized envelope to: City Guides c/o Friends of the S.F. Public Library, Main Library, Civic Center, San Francisco, CA 94102.

A recorded schedule of walking tours can be heard by calling 557-4266.

Local Water Pollution Can Be Prevented

San Francisco will undertake a Water Pollution Prevention campaign in May designed to inform residents about household hazardous products, their alternatives and safe disposal. Speakers will be available for 5 to 10-minute slide presentations and to provide written materials. A booth will also be set up at special events. For information, call Paula Kehoe at 695-7317.

San Francisco's sewer system collects both street runoff and wastewater from residents, businesses and industries in the same pipe called a combined sewer system. Unlike most cities in the Bay Area, San Francisco treats the majority of its stormwater along with its sanitary wastewater prior to discharge in the S.F. Bay and Pacific Ocean.

Although the wastewater is treated, both the Bay and Ocean are at risk when hazardous products, such as used motor oil, paints and solvents are poured into sinks, flushed down toi-

lets, or dumped into storm drains. All of the pollutants contained within these products cannot be completely removed by the sewer treatment processes, and can pass through the treatment plants to the Bay or Ocean. They can also contaminate the City's sludge that is used as fertilizer or landfill cover.

One of San Francisco's solutions to this problem is the Water Pollution Prevention Program (WPPP) with its goal of "source reduction" - reducing the amount of toxic pollutants entering the combined sewer system. Source techniques for residents include recycling motor oil rather than its disposal down a drain, using less toxic cleaning products, and limiting the use of lawn and garden chemicals.

Although the WPPP represents a long-term commitment in protecting and improving the quality of both the Bay and Ocean, it can't be done without cooperation and participation from the community.

Fire Damages Rear Of Bayshore Church

Firefighters and police rushed to the scene of a smoky afternoon fire March 31 which damaged the rear of the Rose Olivet Baptist Church on Bayshore Blvd. No injuries were reported.

Large flames were visible over rooftops around 3 p.m. as firemen battled the stubborn blaze for 40 minutes before finally bringing it under control. Bayshore Blvd. was closed for more than two hours as befuddled commuters were detoured up a suddenly bustling Leland Ave.

Free Low Income 'Quit Smoking' Class Continues in May

Health Center Number Three and the American Lung Association of San Francisco continue a free series of Monday afternoon classes for low-income smokers on how to quit the habit and stay smoke-free through May 23, 5:30 to 7 p.m. at Health Center Number Three, 1525 Silver Ave. Call Scott Thomas at 543-4410 for more information.

Wilson's Career Day a Success Story



Principal Joe Buonavista addressed volunteers from all walks of business life who attended the Second Annual Woodrow Wilson Career Day. Students were given an idea of the many career choices available to them, and a peek into the world of business.

VVCC Seeks Volunteers to Lead Specialized Clubs for Valley Youth

Visitacion Valley Community Center is appealing to the community for volunteers with an interest in helping youth to organize clubs. Joining a club is a good way for youth to meet and get to know others with similar interests, while developing those interests in ways that can provide lifelong benefits.

Clubs can be organized around any number of skills and interests. If you have an interest in something that you would like to share with youth and with other like-minded adults, you should take advantage of this great opportunity. Call Julie at 467-6400 to discuss the possibilities.

Some types of clubs we know of include: stamp (baseball card, doll, rock, etc.) collector's clubs; en-

trepreneurial clubs; social clubs; garden clubs; sports clubs; 4-H clubs; dance clubs; photo clubs; discussion groups; reading circles; sewing circles; craft clubs; car enthusiasts, theatre groups and walking clubs.

There are hundreds of ideas for organized clubs, and tens of hundreds of youth who could be interested in your favorite subject matter. Why not encourage them to get involved in the pursuit of that activity which has given you so much satisfaction in life?

There will be a meeting for those who would like to discuss the possibility of sponsoring a club for youth on Wednesday, May 4, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at 50 Raymond Ave. in the upstairs Ballroom. Please join us!

Thanks, Julie.

American Lung Association Offers Helpful Tips for Better Air Quality

In hosting the third annual Clear Air Awards Luncheon May 13, the American Lung Association of San Francisco (ALA/SF) honors individuals and businesses who have led the way to better air quality. The local Association reminds San Franciscans, however, that everyone has the ability and responsibility to help in the fight for cleaner air and offers tips on how to achieve the goal.

"Lung disease accounts for 300,000 deaths a year," said Karen Licavoli program director for Environmental-Occupational Health for the ALA/SF, "and the death rate climbs faster than almost any other killer disease. Because our lungs are constantly filtering everything in the air we inhale, the cleaner the air, the healthier our lungs can be."

Suggestions include:

- * Drive less. Take mass transit or a car pool to work; walk or bicycle whenever possible. It saves fuel and decreases exhaust.

- * Keep your car well-tuned so that fuels are burned cleanly. Motor vehicle exhaust is comprised of many dangerous air pollutants that can cause lung disease and irritation.

- * Keep your indoor air clean at home and work. Test for radon; choose home products without aerosols and toxic ingredients.

- * Don't smoke!

- * If you do smoke, quit! Ask the American Lung Association of San Francisco for help to quit smoking by dialing 1-800-LUNG USA.

FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE GRAPEVINE

MAY 1989

*Formed at the request of the S.F. Board of Supervisors, the Candlestick Park Transportation Task Force prepared a detailed report of affected local traffic conditions relating to ball-park events.

*S.F. Department of Social Services, in cooperation with the Mayor's Homeless Program, began a project to place homeless families, women and children in vacant apartments at Geneva Towers.

*Keynote speaker Denis Hayes, founder of Earth Day, called upon "a new generation of citizen activists to mobilize in 'averting planetary disaster' at the first annual awards dinner of the Coalition of San Francisco Neighborhoods on April 25.

*Seventeen boys and girls from the community experienced their first frolic in the snow by visiting Boreal Ski Lodge at Donner Pass.

*Neighborhood residents awaited the Fifth Annual Visitacion Valley Street Fair and Parade scheduled for May 20.

*Jonathon Kaartunen became the first Visitacion Valley Middle School student to participate in the Eight Annual Solo-Ensemble Festival.

GRAPEVINE VISITACION VALLEY

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- * Avoid regular exposure to second-hand smoke, especially in crowded and poorly ventilated rooms.

- * Conserve energy by insulating your home, setting your thermostat lower in the winter and higher in the summer. Recycle your trash.

- * Support state and local clean air regulations. Fight for tougher clean air laws and make sure they are enforced.

Featured at the luncheon will be an address by Mary Nichols, assistant administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency named by President Clinton to enforce the Clean Air Act. Recipients of Clean Air Awards for 1994 will be announced following the event.

GRAPEVINE MAILBOX

Proposition E

Dear Editor:

I am in complete agreement with the Mayor's desire to keep all library branches open and to complete the new Main. Given the current budget constraints he is trying to impose on the Library System, that is simply impossible. What the Mayor neglects to mention whenever he speaks on the subject is that the budget cut he proposes between \$452,000 and \$1.7 million may allow branch buildings to remain open, but will dangerously affect the quality of all library services. The mayor is suggesting that the citizens of San Francisco and he can, without Proposition E, have their cake and eat it, too - to coin a phrase. This cannot be done.

Proposition E mandates a minimum of 26 branches, a main library (which would also serve as a branch for Tenderloin residents) and a library facility for the blind. It provides money to purchase books so that open branches will not be empty, out-of-date shells. Instead, they will be vibrant, helpful institutions serving the entire City and saving funds in the long run by providing efficient access to information and a safe after-school haven for youngsters.

Proposition E enjoys wide support among elected officials and the community at large because it is a workable solution to a serious problem. While guaranteeing that 1.5 percent of the city budget will go to the library, Proposition E does not increase taxes and does not mandate shifting funds from other City programs. I urge you to support Proposition E.

Christine Ortiz

Book Review

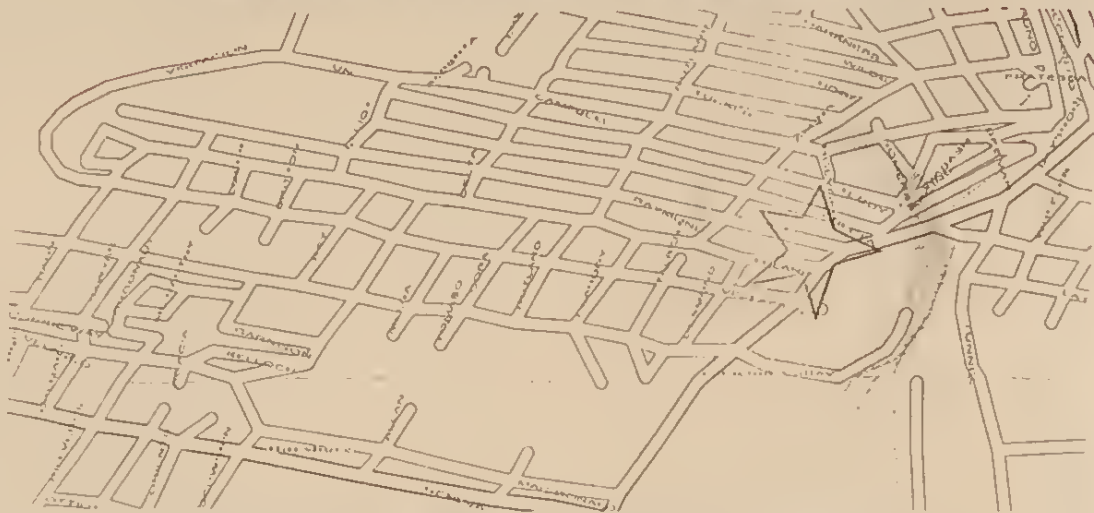
Cliff House & Lands End: San Francisco's Seaside Retreat by Ariel Rubissow; Golden Gate National Park Association; 1993; 48 pgs.

In this colorful new book complete with sparkling text, historical photographs and an interesting chronology, local author Rubissow captures all the people, places and things - past and present - that made this location a popular destination for generations of San Franciscans, as well as a popular touring spot today for the City's many visitors.

NEWS TIPS? CALENDAR ITEMS?

All submissions should be in by the 20th of month prior to publication.

VISITACION VALLEY



COME TO THE FAIR!

RAYMOND AVE. AT BAYSHORE BLVD. • MAY 21 • 10 A.M. TO 4:30 P.M.

Healthy Beginnings: Nutrition's Role in Preventing Birth Defects

A native New Yorker, James I. Mills, M.D., arrived on the National Institute of health campus in 1979, committed to improving scientific understanding of neonatology and birth defects. While climbing the ranks to chief of the Pediatric Epidemiology Section of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Dr. Mills has studied the relationship between birth defects and diet, vitamins, obesity and caffeine, as well as many non-dietary variables such as drug use and contraception methods.

In this interview, Dr. Mills discusses recent nutrition-related research on the prevention of neural tube defects, low birth weight and other adverse birth outcomes.

Q: What is the incidence of birth defects today in the United States?

A: The risk for major malformations among the general population today is around two percent. Certain segments of the population, however, such as women with insulin-dependent diabetes and those who have given birth previously to a child with neural tube defects, have an increased risk of delivering malformed babies compared to the general population. In both of these latter instances, metabolic or nutritional factors are certainly important.

Q: Can women with insulin-dependent diabetes reduce their risk of having children with birth defects?

A: Women who have insulin-dependent diabetes at the time they become pregnant have a two-to-three times greater risk of having malformed babies than other women. These malformations can affect the central nervous system, heart, kidneys and other organs. Unfortunately, the biochemical mechanisms or causes of such malformations are not yet known. But practically speaking, the risk of malformations can be reduced considerably with good metabolic control prior to the time the embryo's organs start developing. So if a woman with insulin-dependent diabetes has her blood sugar well-controlled before she gets pregnant, her risk of delivering a malformed baby as well as miscarriage is much, much lower.

Q: What is a neural tube defect (NTD)?

A: In simple terms, a neural tube defect is a malformation of the brain or spinal cord (neurological system) during embryonic development. Infants born with spina bifida, where the spinal cord is exposed, can grow to adulthood, but usually suffer from paralysis or other disabilities. Babies born with anencephaly, where most or all of the brain is missing, usually die shortly after birth. These NTDs make up about five percent of all U.S. birth defects each year.

Q: Can NTDs be prevented?

A: In 1991, the British Medical Research Trial reported that women with a previously NTD-affected child, who took folic acid or multivitamins with folic acid before and during each pregnancy, had a reduced risk of having other NTD-affected children than those who took multivitamins without folic acid or no vitamins. A subsequent Hungarian study in women who never had NTD-affected children found that those who received vitamins containing folic acid were less likely than those taking placebos to have children with NTDs. Based on those and other findings, the U.S. Public Health Service recommended that all women of childbearing age take 0.4 milligrams (mg) of folic acid per day.

Q: What government action has been taken?

A: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has proposed fortifying the food supply with 140 micrograms of folic acid per 100 grams of grain including pasta, rice, cornmeal, flour and other grain products. This is estimated to prevent up to one-half or 2,000 NTDs annually. But there's been considerable debate on both sides of the proposal, including from the Centers for Disease Control, which is advocating a higher level of fortification. One argument against such higher levels is that those at increased risk due to poor diets are likely to get the least amount of supplementation from food, while those that don't need it at all are going to consume the largest amounts. Furthermore, folic acid can mask pernicious anemia, a condition resulting from vitamin B-12 deficiency. If this condition is not properly treated, it can cause permanent neurological damage.

Q: What is your opinion on this issue?

A: I agree with FDA's recommendation for more conservative levels of fortification. The number of people at risk for pernicious anemia and for neurological damage is much higher than the anticipated number of NTD cases to be prevented. At this point, we're unsure what upper level of fortification is safe, and we'd be exposing some 260 million people through the food supply. If a problem does occur, how will we discover if it's related? Everyone in the country will have been exposed, so there will be no control or comparison groups. It'll also be difficult to quantify the exact benefits of folate fortification, because the NTD rate has been declining due to prenatal diagnosis and termination of such pregnancies.

U.S. Infant Deaths Due to Birth Defects 1990

Birth defects accounted for 21.5 percent of all infant deaths in the U.S. in 1990. Of these, the largest proportion (32 percent) were due to heart defects. The following chart outlines other birth defects that contributed to infant mortality.

Heart	32%
Respiratory	14%
Nervous System	13%
Chromosomal	12%
Other	29%

Source: March of Dimes 1993

Q: Is NICHD conducting any research on folic acid and birth defects?

A: We're conducting a study of folic acid intake and birth defects with the Irish Health Research Board. Blood samples taken from pregnant women in Dublin will be analyzed to study the relationship of folic acid and pregnancy outcome. In Ireland, multivitamin use is uncommon. So there's less concern about getting the specimen before prenatal care begins, which is necessary to avoid possible confounding effects of vitamins taken

after an NTD occurs. We hope to have results from this study within a year.

Q: What other perinatal vitamins have been studied recently?

A: In the early 1990s, several reports from England showed that children receiving intramuscular shots of vitamin K shortly after birth had a higher risk of developing leukemia than those who received the vitamin orally or not at all. These reports were taken very seriously, since every U.S. newborn in the last 20 years or so has received vitamin K shots to prevent life-threatening hemorrhagic disease. Working with Mark Klebanoff, M.D., of NICHD, we examined U.S. infant birth records from the time the vitamin K prophylactic measures were introduced. Children in the study were followed for seven years after birth. Our results, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, showed that there was no difference in the cancer rates of children who received the vitamin K shots and those who did not. A second study in Sweden also confirmed the U.S. findings.

Q: How do non-nutritive substances like caffeine affect pregnancy outcomes?

A: We published a study last year in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) which showed no association between moderate caffeine consumption and adverse pregnancy outcomes such as miscarriage, low birth rate and short gestation. While it confirmed other research on prenatal exposure to caffeine over the last decade, our study had several distinct advantages. First, women who were trying to become pregnant were recruited within 21 days of conception, which is before most people identify pregnancies or collect information on pregnancy exposures. Second, on each of their seven clinic visits, the women were interviewed about their caffeine consumption, including the quantity they consumed and from what sources. Third, we identified all the miscarriages occurring from three weeks after conception up to delivery. The data were not biased by women who had had a miscarriage and were asked retrospectively about their dietary or other habits.

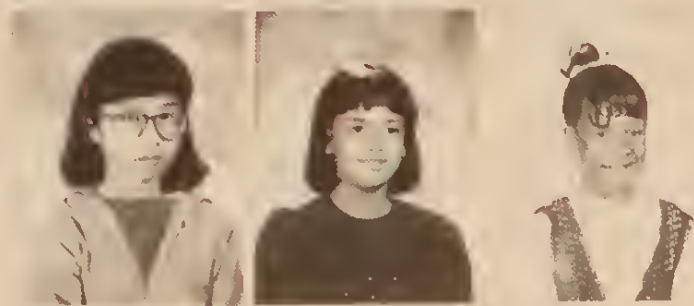
Q: Wasn't another study published recently contradicting your findings?

A: Claire Infante-Rivard, M.D. of Montreal's McGill University published a study in a December 1993 issue of JAMA which showed a relationship between caffeine intake and miscarriage. There are several problems with the study that could explain the contradiction in findings. First, information on women's caffeine consumption was collected only after they had miscarried, which is subject to recall bias. Second, there's a significant chance they missed many women with spontaneous abortions who did not go to the hospital. Third, there was no attempt to assess the volume of coffee or other beverages consumed, which, in turn, would make it difficult to calculate the amount of caffeine consumed.

Q: Is it safe for pregnant women to consume caffeine in moderation?

A: Yes, I continue to stand by my previous conclusion that 300 mg of caffeine - or two or three cups of coffee daily - is not associated with spontaneous abortion, preterm delivery or any adverse effects in the fetus. Moreover, we did not find any association between intakes of caffeine over 300 mg and adverse effects; but the number of study subjects consuming the higher amounts was too small to be certain that there was no risk.

Three VVES Student Entries Awarded In NOW Poster and Essay Contest



Tiffany Ng

Natalia Aldana

Ashley Lee

Three students from Visitacion Valley Elementary School received awards in the recent Women's History Poster and Essay Contest sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Tiffany Ng, a fifth-grader in Ms. Nancy Chin's class, received a third-place award for her composition and poster of Rachel Louise Carson.

Honorary mentions were given two students of Ms. Mildred Hale, third-grader Natalia Aldana and fourth-grader Ashley Lee, who depicted and wrote biographical sketches - Natalia on Antonia Novello; Ashley on Violette Anderson.

VVCC honors its hardworking students!

ANTONIA NOVELLO

By Natalia Aldana

When Antonia Novello was a child, she dreamed of being a doctor. But when she grew up, she went further than becoming a doctor - she became the fourteenth surgeon general of the United States.

In 1990, a small group gathered for a ceremony to honor Antonia's efforts. George Bush officially made her the surgeon general because she educated people and kids for their health.



VIOLETTE N. ANDERSON

By Ashley Lee

July 16, 1882 - Violette N. Anderson, lawyer, was born in London, England. Ms. Anderson was the first black woman admitted to the bar in the state of Illinois and was the first female assistant prosecutor in Chicago from 1922-1923.

She was the first black woman admitted to practice in the U.S. Court Eastern Division, as well as the first black woman to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

RACHEL LOUISE CARSON

By Tiffany Ng

Rachel Louise Carson was born in Springdale, Pennsylvania. She was a happy and intelligent young girl who would grow up to be a heroine for the earth.

In 1936, when she was working at the United States Bureau of Fisheries, very few people knew much about marine life. She wrote a series of seven-minute radio programs about marine life called "Romance Under the Waters." She made her programs easy to understand for people who did not know the scientific language.

Later on, Rachel Louise wrote "Under the Sea-Wind" and "The Sea Around Us." These books helped us to become acquainted with the sea and its life. Rachel also wrote "The Edge of the Sea," which was not about the ocean this time, but about where the land meets the ocean. She did not just list the plants and animals, she talked about how they belonged to a community, too. She helped us to understand that we must live in

harmony with our environment.

Her fourth book, "Silent Spring," was published in 1962. It alerted the public to the dangers of pesticides. Later, the book was published in dozens of languages, and the message spread worldwide that we needed to protect our environment.

People wrote to Congress, the Department of Agriculture and of the Interior, the Public Health Service, the Food and Drug Administration - and President John F. Kennedy proclaimed that a pesticides committee would be formed in his Office of Science and Technology.

She was elected as Conservationist of the Year. Rachel had started a movement, and now she would leave it to the government to take care of.

Rachel Carson is an important woman in history because she taught us how to appreciate nature and to care for the earth. She is also a role model for women who want to become a biologist.

We thank Rachel Louise Carson, the Heroine for the Earth.

Ballot Proposition To Help Preserve Parks and Wildlife

CalPAW '94, the Parks and Wildlife Initiative placed on the 1994 June ballot, is an obligation bond act that will give about \$2 billion to acquire, protect and develop parkland, wildlife habitat, prime agricultural land, coastal areas, river habitat and other resources. Also provided would be funds for existing areas which have been severely degraded due to budget cuts. California is growing fast and the growth is putting pressure on what little open wildlife habitat parkland space we have.

CalPAW '94 would protect wildlife areas, endangered species, agricultural land, forests, rivers and other territory treasured by California.

Funds are badly needed to develop recreational and park facilities in neighborhoods throughout California that CalPAW '94 would provide. Funds would also protect cultural heritage sites important to ethnic communities such as Asians, African Americans, Native Americans, and Latinos, as well as some very important State historical sites.

Every city in California will benefit from CalPAW '94, because every city and county will get an allocation for local park and recreation programs; individual projects and programs are fairly distributed throughout the state.

To pay for all these acquisitions and programs, California will sell bonds to be paid off from the State General Fund. Sold only on approval of the Governor and the Treasurer, the bonds will be made available only if

their sale will not impair the financial stability of the state.

Based on current population, paying-off the bonds over a period of 20 years would cost each Californian about 50 cents per month, an amount paid for from existing general funds.

Although California continues to suffer from the recession, the Treasurer has announced more than two billion dollars in general obligation bonds can be accommodated. The bond act contains language stating the bonds will only be sold if there is no threat to the State's credit rating.

Investments made possible by CalPAW '94 will protect tourism, create jobs and improve quality of life in California while strengthening the state's economy, a most important factor in its credit rating. For parks

See Page 8

A Scientific Understanding of Trans Fatty Acids

Recent questions about the role of trans fatty acids in raising blood cholesterol levels should not cause people to make wholesale changes in their diets, according to Margo A. Denke, M.D., assistant professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of Texas Medical Center for Human Nutrition.

"The trans fatty acid story is a very minor point in a cholesterol lowering diet," Denke said at a AMA/IFIC media briefing in New York. "It shouldn't motivate people to change from margarine back to butter. The most important thing in the diet is still saturated fat."

Trans fats are a type of fat found naturally in some foods. They are also formed when polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats undergo hydrogenation, a process whereby hydrogen molecules are added to the oils to improve their stability and utility in certain foods.

Because vegetable foods are often hydrogenated to produce shortenings and margarines, reports of trans fatty acids research are often described in terms of the merits of butter versus margarine.

Health authorities have long recommended a reduced intake of certain saturated fats such as butter and lard, because of their ability to raise blood cholesterol levels.

But a 1990 study by Ronald Mensink, M.D. and Martijn Katan, M.D. of the Netherlands showed very high intakes of trans fatty acids might behave like such saturates in raising blood and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) levels, a class of lipoproteins associated with cholesterol deposits on artery walls. But since the study used about seven times more hydrogenated

oil than normally consumed by Americans per day, relevance of the findings have been questioned.

Subsequent studies using amounts of trans fatty acids typically consumed by Americans have shown total and LDL cholesterol levels may be raised in a direction similar to saturated fat, but not to the same degree.

In addition, trans fatty acids account for only a small component of total fat intake. Of the total fat consumed by typical Americans each day, only about six to eight grams come from trans fatty acids.

"Trans fats account for two percent to three percent of the daily calories compared with 14 percent from saturated fat," explained Denke. "Therefore, the focus should be on modifying intake of total fat and saturated fat. People need to realize that it's not just the type of fat used, but how much fat."

Denke urged caution in translating the results of initial studies on trans fatty acids into public policy.

"It has taken at least 30 studies to confirm the hypercholesterolemic effects on saturated fats," she advised. "Much more research on trans fats still needs to be conducted."

Scientific examination of specific fatty acids is relatively recent. In the 1950s, researchers were just beginning to investigate the fat/cholesterol hypothesis. By the 1980s, the focus had advanced to components of blood cholesterol such as lipoproteins and triglycerides.

Today, researchers are taking a microscopic view of fatty acids to assess whether individual characteristics such as carbon-chain links affect cholesterol and lipoprotein levels.

"One interesting example is stearic

fatty acid, a saturated fatty acid with an 18-carbon chain," explained Denke. "While many fats contain very little stearic acid, cocoa butter and beef tallow have high levels of this fatty acid."

Research as far back as the 1940s and 1950s indicates stearic acid does not raise blood cholesterol levels like other saturated fatty acids. Studies suggest this paradoxical action may be due to the fatty acid's metabolism. Shortly after absorption, most of the dietary stearic acid is desaturated to oleic acid, a monounsaturated fatty acid.

As scientific knowledge about dietary fat continues to evolve, Denke advises Americans to practice balance, variety and moderation in their daily food choices.

"From a scientist's perspective, the goal is to discover the ultimate element, the building block that might be a causal factor in raising cholesterol levels," she said. "But it still must be put into the context of the overall diet."

"The best advice remains to modify dietary fat to 30 percent of calories over time, reduce saturated fat, and eat plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains."

In Loving Memory

Aubrey James Richardson, Jr. departed this life suddenly on April 18, 1994. He will be sadly missed by his Mom, Brenda Hall-Lopez, and by his brothers, Bautiese Richardson and Matthew Lopez, and by all his family. Aubrey was born October 12, 1969 and was the father of two children, Blake and Ahrianna. Aubrey and his family are in our loving thoughts and prayers.



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2. "Book 'em, Dano!"
3. "Trust me! I know what I'm doing!"
4. "This is the city: Los Angeles, California."
5. "There is nothing wrong with your television."
6. "And that's the way it is..."
7. "Dy-no-mite!"
8. "Meathead!"
9. "Bang! Zoom!"
10. "I pity the fool!"
11. "Never fear, Smith is here!"
12. "Beam me up, Scotty!"
13. "Your mission, Jim, should you decide to accept it..."
14. "Zip it!"
15. "Surprise! Surprise! Surprise!"
16. "Dummy!"
17. "Say the secret word!"

18. "Cheeseburger, cheeseburger, cheeseburger!"
19. "Great Caesar's Ghost!"
20. "Yabba dabba doo!"
- A. CBS Evening News
- B. Sanford and Son
- C. Morton Downey, Jr. Show
- D. Sledge Hammer!
- E. Lost in Space
- F. The A-Team
- G. Dragnet
- H. Good Times
- I. All in the Family
- J. The Flintstones
- K. Hawaii 5-0
- L. Adventures of Superman
- M. Star Trek
- N. Saturday Night Live
- O. You Bet Your Life
- P. Get Smart
- Q. The Honeymooners
- R. Golmer Pyle, U.S.M.C.
- S. Mission Impossible
- T. Outer Limits

Answers: 1-P; 2-K; 3-D; 4-G; 5-T; 6-A; 7-H; 8-I; 9-O; 10-F; 11-E; 12-M; 13-S; 14-C; 15-R; 16-B; 17-O; 18-N; 19-L; 20-J

Tiger of the Snows



By Bill Clark

There was no doubt of which cat made the tracks. But out of scientific curiosity or perhaps out of sheer habit, I took a small plastic ruler from my day sack and measured the fresh marks in the snow: about 16.6 centimeters across the paw print. A bit of mental calculation indicated that it was a tad more than six and a half old-fashioned inches - which sent an old-fashioned shiver down my spine. This track was at least twice the size of an American mountain lion. We were tracking a very large feline, indeed!

I think it was Edward Abbee who once remarked that someone wasn't truly in the wilderness unless there was a predator lurking about that was large and powerful enough to eat that person. Going by that definition, I believe we were truly in a wilderness - that of the northern spurs of Russia's Sikhote Alin Mountains. And the animal involved was the fabled Siberian tiger - largest cat to walk the face of the earth.

OK, let's check the gait. From the point where the tiger lifted its right rear foot, to the place where the same foot came back down into the snow measured 110 cm. - a bit more than 43 inches. That's the stride of a mighty large cat!

Yuri Dunishenko shrugged and studied snow flurries falling from the overcast sky while making an estimation based on decades of experience with Siberian tigers. "About 280 kilograms," he figured. That's a bit more than 600 pounds - nearly double the weight of an African lion. "I hope that includes a full belly," I commented.

We pushed on, up to the snow-covered mountain slope, and through the tangle of a dormant, deciduous forest. Yuri pointed out trees with casual familiarity, although to me they were entirely exotic - "Manchurian walnut," he noted. "That's Amur cork oak. Look at the unusual bark. And over there are some Korean pines. The pines are very productive and provide much food for wild boar, red deer and other animals which the tiger prey upon. Unfortunately, the timber companies have cut so much!"

A loss of important food trees is partially why populations of prey animals have declined in recent years. And as prey populations decline, so must the population of the tigers which they support.

But it isn't the ecological consequences of cutting too many trees that is responsible for the current crash in Siberian tiger numbers. The real culprit is poaching.

We trudged on through the snow to get a good idea of the tiger's habitat. How thick are the forests? How rug-

ged is the terrain? What is the largest size vehicle maneuverable enough to turn around on the forest roads? What type of ground clearance will be necessary for the vehicle? And what type of cold weather gear will be required by rangers?

Upon forested mountains, we came upon footprints of the awesome cat. In fact, we eventually encountered tracks of two, or possibly three of these enormous felines, uncertain the additional tracks were those of the same animal. I was struck by the majesty of the unseen beasts and the land they rule.

It is all so enormous. Siberia, meaning "Sleeping Land," stretches eight time zones from the Ural Mountains to the Pacific Ocean - nearly five million square miles. It's larger than the U.S., Canada or China. Siberia claims 53,000 rivers and a million lakes. The forests, or "taiga," continue uninterrupted for thousands of miles with birch, pine, larch and spruce trees providing habitat to an uncertain variety of wild animals - uncertain because Siberia has yet to be fully studied by biologists.

Not only extreme in its largeness, Siberia is also extreme in its cold. Winter temperatures can drop to 85 degrees below zero. Add a bit of polar wind and one understands why this is a traditional place of exile.

Although most of Siberia is relatively flat, the tiger's preferred habitat is the rugged terrain in the eastern provinces of Khabarovsk and Primorsky. Here, we biked through the snows of the Sikhote Alins and climbed upon a precipice overlooking a serpentine valley. Dunishenko explained that tigers favor such locations, and sometimes rest for hours above their wild domain.

Over the years, I have followed tracks of wolves, leopards, antelopes and elephants. But never have I pondered the footprint of such an enormous predator. Fresh tracks of a Siberian tiger confirm the presence of a mighty sovereign.

We found the tracks about a hundred miles east of the Amur River. The Chinese call it Heilongjian - the Black Dragon River. In this part of the world, a big male tiger can claim a territory of about 300,000 acres - nearly 500 square miles - and few dare challenge his sovereignty to one square inch of it.

Few, save the poachers, who for a few dollars, yen or yuan, will fire a few grams of lead and sacrifice yet another living colossus. They are prepared to kill more of these magnificent creatures and thus further impoverish the earth, preparing to rob from humanity one of the few surviving predators that can still inspire in our souls the primeval sense of vulnerability in a great and wondrous landscape.

According to Dunishenko, a biologist with the Khabarovsk Wildlife Institute, there are about 250 tigers left in Siberia, with a couple of dozen more across the border in northern China, and perhaps a few odd strays in North Korea. Although the whole lot together probably doesn't tally 300, authorities agree that during the past two winters, about 100 tigers were killed by poachers. And the slaughter continues. Winter is the favorite poaching season because the big cat's spoor is easy to identify and follow in the snow.

Friends of Animals (FoA) went to Siberia on a cooperative scouting mission with the Tiger Trust, a British-based organization, at the invitation of the Russian Ministry for Protection of Environment and Natural Resources. Our intentions were simple: study the problem and propose some solutions. But to gather all the important facts, we had to talk with officials in Moscow, consult with both government and non-government officials in habitat areas, and venture into the forest for first-hand information.

Primary cause of the tiger's crisis was clear from the start. It's being poached to provide raw materials for a vigorous consumer market in China. Tiger bones are used to make the infamous tiger bone wine, having alleged medicinal value, while whiskers, sinews, claws - and, of course, the lovely fur - are all consumed relentlessly.

Other countries of the Far East may also share in some of the blame. Nationals of South Korea, Taiwan and Japan have been implicated in the horrible trade - we even came across one U.S. citizen dabbling in the racket! But there is little doubt at least 80 percent of the poached tigers go straight to China.

The ultimate cause of the tiger's dilemma are both political and economic. A decade ago, China was poor. It's ramshackle communist economy didn't provide enough wealth for expensive luxuries such as tiger bone wine - although the brew has been known for centuries. But now, the Chinese have a burgeoning economy and quite a few wealthy entrepreneurs who can pay the price of luxury products of wildlife origin.

It isn't just tigers they're considering, but rhinos, musk deer, pangolins, snakes, sea turtles, owls and who-knows-what-else. Tigers just happen to be the most endangered items on this horrid menu.

Chinese appetite for tigers and other rare animals has provoked anger in the U.S. and several other countries. Last September, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt "certified" both China and Taiwan - being formally put on notice - for their failures to crack down on illegal wildlife dealers. Meanwhile, the tigers remain under very intense pressure.

The Tiger Trust/FoA visit to Russia found conspicuous dealings in dead tigers. A simple hand-written notice offering to sell a tiger skin was pinned to a tree on one street in Khabarovsk, a Russian city on the northwest edge of tiger habitat. Offers to purchase tiger bones and skins are regularly published in the Vladivostok newspapers.

In one incident last December, a U.S. citizen of Korean origin served as intermediary for dealers who brought a complete tiger skin to one of the members of our team, offering to sell it for \$4,000.

It soon became apparent to us that recent developments in Russia have made tigers infinitely more vulnerable than ever before. Not only do the Chinese have much greater wealth for purchasing tiger parts, but the Russians have much less capability to protect these rare cats.

Mikhail Bibikov, chairman of the Environment Ministry's regional office in Vladivostok, told us: "The Iron Curtain also had a few useful attributes. It protected wildlife very well." But today, with dramatic political changes in Russia, there are now

many new border crossing points with China, and a vigorously developing trade. Freight trains weekly haul thousands of logs out of Siberia and into China - and who's to know if a few of those logs aren't hollowed-out to carry the remains of a once fearsome Siberian tiger?

Today, the Russian economy is in a shambles. Valued at more than a dollar just a few years ago, the ruble is today worth less than one-tenth of a cent. Change a \$20 bill and you can stuff about 25,000 nearly worthless rubles in your pocket.

As a result, much of the civil service has simply disintegrated. For example, about 100 Hunting Service rangers were employed by the government a year ago to control hunting in Primorsky Province. With hyperinflation of the ruble, and the central government's inability to compensate, the true buying power of a ranger's monthly salary collapsed to a small fraction of its original value. As a result, at least 70 rangers simply left their jobs - as there is vocal suspicion by several authorities that those remaining "supplement" their meager incomes by poaching.

We also found an upsetting level of internal conflict within the government offices. We visited many offices - ecology, customs, hunting service, district attorneys and wildlife institutes.

In some offices, non-communist newcomers seemed to lack the experience needed to take decisive action, while veteran communist holdovers in others seemed ready to exploit the political crisis to regain power.

Mikhail Balagansky, a provincial Hunting Service chief who keeps a bust of Lenin on his bookshelf, bitterly complained, "It's a burden for our administration to fund us. Russia is weakened by perestroika. We must now put our house in order. I hope perestroika will be finished soon, and the tiger will be saved."

Tying the Siberian tiger's survival to the end of the perestroika was a bit difficult for me to swallow. But I kept my silence and reminded myself that this fellow was part of a machine responsible for decades of horror. Surely there was risk of thermonuclear holocaust, the bitter misery of the gulags, oppression in East Europe, and the selling of tanks and missiles to the Iraqis, along with the African influx of Kalashnikov automatic rifles to arm any would-be dictator leading a "people's" revolution.

Perhaps the United States has not been totally innocent either, but in all the years FoA has been helping with anti-poaching campaigns in Africa and Asia, we have never come across an American-made military weapon - such as a M-16 - being used by poachers. We have, however, encountered an abundance of Soviet-made Kalashnikovs.

The first decision in my mind was to simply avoid working with people like Balagansky. A key to helping Siberian tigers survive was to find people with some sort of authority who are not carrying grudges, and then cooperate with them to create a credible anti-poaching effort.

We began working with the officials of the Russian Ministry for the Protection of the Environment and Natural Resources to create an entirely new anti-poaching unit to have authority throughout the entire Siberian tiger habitat in Russia. This unit will be

composed mostly of young officers released from the Russian Army as a result of Moscow's military cutbacks. Presently, we're looking for the best - energetic, non-political, bright and resourceful. And they'll be offered attractive salaries (by Russian standards) which are tied to the U.S. dollar.

We hope to put together six to eight mobil patrols consisting each of at least five good rangers, all to be under the command of Vladimir Shetinin, chief of the environment ministry's Vladivostok office for protection of animals, plants, water and soils. Shetinin has a reputation for being a tough and sincere protector of nature. And a few days with the fellow will convince anyone this reputation is well-earned.

Also tough, but sincere is Alexander "Sasha" Grusdev, Shetinin's director for wildlife protection, who will be the unit's field commander.

Shetinin and Grusdev are something of an odd couple. Where Shetinin is large in both girth and spirit, Grusdev is slim and taciturn. Shetinin has a quick smile, twinkling eyes and a bushy beard, while Grusdev is poker-faced and clean shaven. Shetinin is usually rumpled and always gestures with his hands while he speaks, and Grusdev is usually impeccably neat and as self-disciplined as his karate black belt says he ought to be. It seems they make a good team.

Equipment for the anti-poaching units will likely come from U.S. Army surplus stocks. FoA is in the process of applying for army surplus vehicles, radios and other supplies needed to keep the new units operational and hot after poaching gangs. It is a bizarre turn of events which will take equipment originally manufactured and deployed to do battle with the Russians, and turn it toward helping them protect their own wildlife.

We also met Igor Pugin, the special prosecutor appointed for nature protection. He's the one who will be prosecuting the tiger poachers once they're caught and brought to trial.

Pugin explained that his department has had a very poor record of convictions over the past few years. "It is mostly because of poor training of the rangers," he said. "For example, in one case, an inspector neglected to write down the serial number of a poacher's rifle in his report. Because of this, the rules of evidence were not fulfilled, and the poacher walked away a free man."

Pugin has agreed to conduct special classes for the new anti-poaching units, and teach them all details they must secure to provide enough evidence for a successful prosecution. Convictions in Russia involve fines determined by a criminal's income level.

And tiger poaching carries a fine of 300 times one month's salary (which, even at minimum wage, is a very steep fine in Russia), plus one year at hard labor (Siberian style, no soft American prison), and confiscation of any item involved in the crime (including the poacher's vehicle, if he shot from it, or carried a carcass in it).

Another key member of the team is Yakov Shevchenko, the deputy director of the Primorsky Province Militia. The Russian militia is similar to state police in the U.S., carrying most criminal law enforcement responsibilities. Shevchenko agreed to assign one militia officer to work with the anti-poaching units, assisting in gathering all necessary evidence required for a good prosecution with detailed charges. Existence of a militia officer would also require a captured poacher be brought all the way to Vladivostok for arraignment, breaking all local connections a poacher may have with his village politicians, judges and any corrupt local officials.

We met with customs officials, non-government conservation societies and a variety of other people, gradually piecing together a system which may prevent the Siberian tiger's extinction - even if political pressure from the U.S. and elsewhere fails to persuade the Chinese to shut down their tiger bone wineries, soup kitchens and tiger product pharmacies.

Time will tell if we are successful. Today we can only report the effort has begun.

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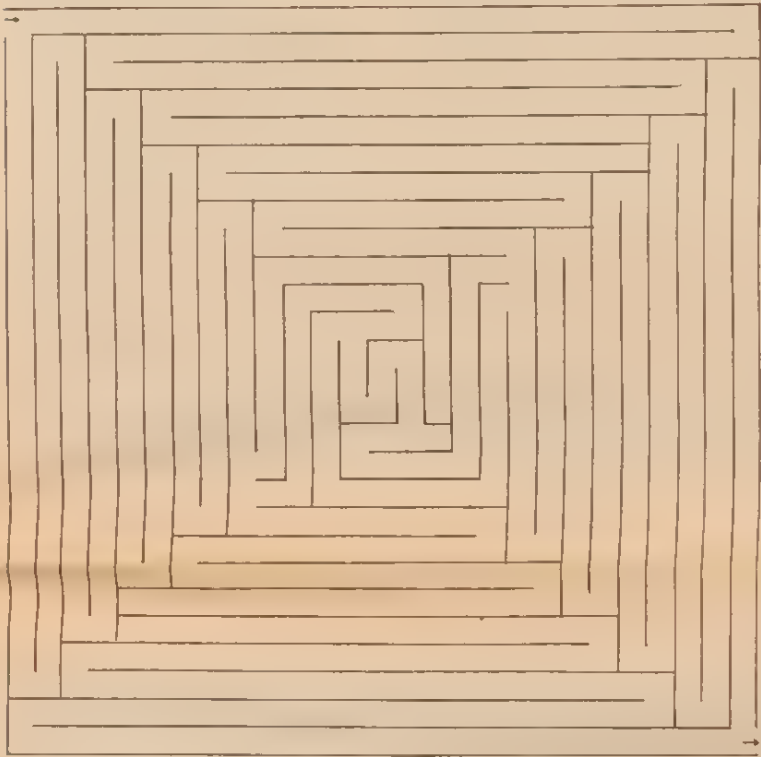
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FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MAY
1: Fred Astaire (1899); Betty Comden (1919); Calamity Jane (1852); Scott Carpenter (1925); Rita Coolidge (1945); Glenn Ford (1916); Joseph Heller (1923); Gary Owens (1935); Jack Paar (1918); Max C. Robinson (1939); George Strait (1952); Nancy Walker (1921)
2: Ted Beasell (1935); Catherine the Great (1729); Bing Crosby (1904); Dr. Benjamin Spock (1903)
3: Mary Astor (1906); Mel Blanc (1908); Stepin Fetchit (1902); Greg Gumbel (1946); Doug Henning (1947); Wynonna Judd (1964); Niccolò Machiavelli (1496); Golda Meir (1898); Michael J. Pollard (1939); Pete Seeger (1919); Walter Slezak (1902); Frankie Valli (1937); Clint Walker (1927)
4: Maynard Ferguson (1928); Audrey Hepburn (1929); Horace Mann (1796); Roberta Peters (1930); George Will (1941)
5: Nellie Bly (1867); Pat Carroll (1927); Ann B. Davis (1926); Alicia Faye (1915); Karl Marx (1818); Tammy Wynette (1942)
6: Sigmund Freud (1896); Stewart Granger (1913); Ross Hunter (1924); Willie Mays (1931); Rudolph Valentino (1895); Orson Welles (1915)
7: Teresa Brewer (1931); Robert Browning (1812); Gary Cooper

(1901); Totie Fields (1930); Gabby Hayes (1885); Archibald MacLeish (1892); Darrin McGavin (1922); Robin Strasser (1945); Peter Tchaikovsky (1840)
8: Melissa Gilbert (1964); David Keith (1954); Sonny Liston (1932); Don Rickles (1926); Toni Tennille (1943); Harry S. Truman (1884)
9: James Barrie (1860); Candice Bergen (1946); John Brown (1800); Albert Finney (1936); Glenda Jackson (1936); Billy Joel (1949); Hank Snow (1914)
10: Fred Astaire (1899); Dave Mason (1946); Robby Thompson (1962)
11: Johnny Appleseed (1774); Irving Berlin (1888); Foster Brooks (1912); Doug McClure (1935); Denver Pyle (1920); Margaret Rutherford (1892); Mort Sahl (1927); Phil Silvers (1912)
12: Burt Bacharach (1929); Yogi Berra (1925); George Carlin (1937); Gloria Estefan (1962); Emilio Estevez (1962); Millie Perkins (1940); Dante Rossetti (1828); Howard K. Smith (1914); Tom Snyder (1936); Steve Winwood (1948)
13: Bea Arthur (1926); Peter Gabriel (1950); Joe Louis (1914); Stevie Wonder (1950)
14: David Byrne (1952); Bobby Darin (1936); George Lucas (1944)
15: Eddy Arnold (1918); Joseph Cotten (1905); Constance Cummings (1910); Pierre Curie (1859); Richard Daley (1902); Laine Kazan (1942); James Mason (1909)
16: Henry Fonda (1905); Janet Jackson (1966); Liberace (1919); Margaret Sullivan (1896); Debra Winger (1955)
17: Dennis Hopper (1936); Maureen O'Sullivan (1911)
18: Frank Capra (1897); Perry Como (1912); Dwayne Hickman (1934); Reggie Jackson (1946); Pope John Paul II (1920); Bill Macy (1922); Robert Morse (1931); Pernell Roberts (1930)
19: David Hartman (1937); James Fox (1939); David Hartman (1935); Grace Jones (1952); Ho Chi Minh (1890)
20: Cher (1946); Joe Cocker (1944); Moshe Dayan (1915); James Stewart (1908)
21: Raymond Burr (1917); Peggy Cass (1924); Armand Hammer (1898); Robert Montgomery (1904); Alexander Pope (1688); Harold Robbins (1916); Mr. T (1952)
22: Richard Benjamin (1938); Michael Constantine (1927); Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859); Quinn Martin (1927); Peter Nero (1934); Sir Laurence Olivier (1907); Harry Ritz (1906); Richard Wagner (1813); Paul Winfield (1941)
23: Barbara Barrie (1931); Rosemary Clooney (1928); Joan Collins (1933); Douglas Fairbanks (1883); James Gleason (1886); Harvin Hagler (1952); Helen O'Connell (1921); Archie Shaw (1910)
24: Roseanne Cash (1955); Tommy Chong (1938); Bob Dylan (1941); Patti Labelle (1944); Priscilla Presley (1946); Queen Victoria of England (1819)
25: Claude Akins (1918); Dixie Carter (1939); Jeanne Crain (1925); Miles Davis (1926); Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803); John Gabriel (1931); Tom T. Hall (1936); Connie Sellecca (1955); Beverly Sills (1929); Gene Tunney (1898); Leslie Uggams (1943); Karen Valentine (1947)
26: Ben Alexander (1911); James Arness (1923); Peter Cushing (1913); Al Jolson (1886); Peggy Lee (1920); Stevie Nicks (1948); Jay Silverheels (1922); John Wayne (1907); Hank Williams, Jr. (1949)
27: Todd Bridges (1965); Louis Gossett, Jr. (1936); Wild Bill Hickok (1837); Christopher Lee (1922); Lee Meriwether (1935); Vincent Price (1911); Sam Snod (1912); Bruce Weitz (1943)
28: Carroll Baker (1931); Dionne Quintuplets (1934); Ian Fleming (1908); Beth Howland (1941); Gladys Knight (1944); Jim Thorpe (1888); Martha Vickers (1925)
29: Patrick Henry (1736); Bob Hope (1903); Stacy Keach (1914); John F. Kennedy (1917)
30: Mel Blanc (1908); Benny Goodman (1909); LaToya Jackson (1956)
31: Don Ameche (1908); Tom Berenger (1950); Clint Eastwood (1930); Gregory Harrison (1950); Jack Holt (1888); Johnny Paycheck (1941); Norman Vincent Peale (1898); Brooke Shields (1935); Lea Thompson (1961); Walt Whitman (1819); Peter Yarrow (1938)

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Captain Michael Dower, newly appointed commander of the Ingleside Police District, was welcomed to the neighborhood by residents during a recent luncheon held at the Visitacion Valley Community Center

Police Week Brings McGruff to Tanforan Park

Police Week is a crime prevention tradition at Tanforan Park, May 13 through 15, where law enforcement agencies from as far as Half Moon Bay and as near as San Bruno and San Francisco Airport set up displays, distribute information and answer questions on a wide range of topics. Also invited are representatives from different crime prevention companies in the private sector who will be demonstrating the latest in personal, business and residential security technology.

Examples of law enforcement vehicles, cars, motorcycles and vans will be on display as McGruff, the Crime Fighting Dog greets all visitors.

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Straight Talk with Girls Against Gangs will air April 29, at 8:30 p.m. on Cityvisions, cable Channel 53, to be broadcast monthly thereafter every fourth Saturday.

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FORINT	N	O	E	N	T	E	K	L	U	P	U	T	K	O
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KYAT	A	D	A	T	E	S	E	P	A	N	H	E	O	I
LEONE	Q	W	A	O	I	T	F	N	O	T	A	R	T	R
LIRA	E	I	S	S	H	H	C	R	E	D	L	I	U	G
MARK	H	O	A	B	T	N	G	U	L	T	R	U	M	U
NGULTRUM	S	Y	N	O	O	U	T	I	F	O	R	I	N	T
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PUNT														
RIEL														
RUBLE														
SHEQALIM														
SUCRE														
TUGRIK														
YUAN														

This Month in S.F. History

MAY
1: In 1974, Muni inaugurated the Fast Pass, providing unlimited access to its buses and streetcars. In 1992 Mayor Frank Jordan declared a second night of curfew in the City to prevent rioting and looting which plagued the downtown area the previous evening, one day after the Rodney King beating trial concluded.
2: In 1923, the Embarcadero Subway, a two-lane underpass built to speed traffic by the Ferry Building, was completed. Also that day, the original Kezar Stadium, built in part with a donation from a generous donor, first opened its gates.
3: In 1850, an early morning fire burned a large portion of the City's business district, causing nearly \$5 million in damages. In 1851, exactly one year later, an even larger fire started at 11 p.m. in a paint store, burning almost 2,000 structures in 10 hours and causing losses in excess of \$11 million. Remarkably, the DeWitt and Harrison warehouse was spared with the use of 80,000 gallons of vinegar.
4: In 1882, the Telegraph Hill Railroad Company was established. Three counterbalance cars operated on a three-block single-track line with turnouts on Greenwich St. from Powell St. to an observatory atop Telegraph Hill. In 1958, the last of Muni's two-man streetcars made their final runs, replaced the next day by newer one-man PCC streetcars.
5: In 1855, the El Dorado, largest and most respected gaming house in the City, closed its doors upon passage of anti-gambling state legislation.
6: In 1856, James King of William, outspoken editor of the Evening Bulletin, was shot to death in a duel with James Casey, publisher of the Sunday Times, in one of the most famous altercations in S.F. history. Casey, perturbed by a Bulletin item identifying him as a one-time Sing-Sing inmate, was executed by vigilantes eight days later.
7: In 1872, Metropolitan Gas Company street lamps were first lit.
8: In 1956, the World Trade Center, located in the Ferry Building, was dedicated.
9: In 1940, the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island opened its second season. In 1948, San Franciscans received their very first telecast.
10: In 1958, a plaque dedication honoring John Geary, the first mayor of San Francisco, was held in Union Square, an event marking the downtown park's dedication as a state historical landmark.
11: In 1854, a marine telegraph line was completed from Fort Point to the downtown area. In 1937, after four years of construction, thousands of pedestrians crossed the newly built Golden Gate Bridge on its opening day.

Little Hollywood Reports

By Su Fassell
LITTLE HOLLYWOOD PARK
Dail Miller of NORCAL and Ron DeLeon of the Park and Rec Dept. joined a recent meeting of the Little Hollywood Association to listen to concerns about deterioration of the Community Park, the undesirable activities there and to hear ideas for park improvement. Previously discussed were ways of eliminating criminal and undesirable activities, increasing the lighting in and around the park and posting a notice that it closes at 10 p.m. (giving police grounds for forcing late-night rowdies and drug dealers to leave). A lot of ideas were explored, including landscaping changes to remove some of the plants and trees where hoodlums hide, repairing tipped and broken barbecues in the park's upper area, and improving park lighting.
Also discussed was possibility of annexing the NORCAL parking lot adjacent to the basketball courts and converting it into a tennis court, an idea Miller said was not presently possible.
DeLeon spoke of experiences other neighborhoods have had with lighted parks. Once lit, nearby residents may consider the nighttime lighting an eyesore; or worse, lighting may make the park even more attractive as a place to "hang out" after dark. He urged careful consideration of these issues by as many neighbors as possible, particularly those who live very close to the park.
A consensus was reached that street lights should first be installed around the park's perimeter before considering illumination in the park's interior, upper and lower areas. Major focus of a regular meeting April 12 was reaching agreement on how everyone in the neighborhood felt about the proposed plan.
RECYCLING
David Aasmann of the City's Recycling Program gave an informative presentation of the many different types of household garbage that can be recycled. You might not have thought of some of these items as candidates for that curbside blue bin: any glass, aluminum cans; 2-liter soda bottles; cardboard, flattened, and tied or bagged in paper; and all kinds of paper: magazines, catalogs, cereal boxes, junk mail, envelopes with windows and paper bags.
Have a question about what's recyclable? Call 330-CURB for answers.
Aasmann talked about the importance of recycling and San Francisco's phenomenal success with the curbside recycling program. City residents now recycle 39 percent of their garbage! Aasmann's group, Recycling Panthers, aims to increase City recycling even more by asking Little Hollywood to lend its support in agreeing

SUMP, THE GRUMP By Jackie Holder



Golden Gate National Recreation Area Events

Call to reserve for most activities.

MAY 7
Baker Beach
*Seacoast Defense: Explore the military history of Battery Chamberlain and participate in a demonstration of the last six-inch disappearing rifle from 12:30 to 1 p.m. Meet the ranger at the gate to Battery Chamberlain at Baker Beach.
Presidio
*Main Post Historical Walk: Join a walking tour of the Presidio covering more than 200 years of San Francisco history, architecture, cultural landscapes and natural history from 10 a.m. to noon by meeting at the Presidio Main Post flagpole (556-0865).
MAY 14
Fort Funston
*Hike to the Bank Swallows: Observe and learn about the threatened California bird nesting in the cliffs of Fort Funston by taking a 1.5 mile strenuous hike through the sand dunes from 10 a.m. to noon. Bring water, binoculars, lunch and a bird book and meet the ranger at the small parking lot at the intersection of John Muir Drive and Skyline Blvd. (556-8371).
Fort Mason
*Fort Mason Center Tour: Take a guided tour through this cultural and recreational facility where more than 50 arts, environmental and cultural groups utilize converted military warehouses for museums, theaters, galleries, classes and workshops. Meet at Fort Mason Center Offices, Building A at 11 a.m. (441-5706).
Presidio
*Mountain Lake to Fort Point Hike: Amble along the last three miles of Presidio founder Anza's route, sharing thoughts of history, weather permitting, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Meet Presidio docent Bob Halsey at Mountain Lake Park, returning by Muni 28 bus (556-0865).
MAY 15
Presidio
*A Walk on the Wild Side: The Presidio contains wonderful natural areas to explore. Learn about the plants, animals and geology of the San Francisco peninsula, weather permitting, from 10 a.m. to noon. Dress warmly (556-0865).
*Presidio Architecture and Cultural Landscape: Examine the historic buildings and landscape on the Presidio and see how the post has developed since 1776. Many styles of architecture will be seen from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Bring a camera and meet the ranger in front of the Officers' Club at the Main Post.
MAY 21
Presidio
*Main Post Historical Walk (See May 7)

MAY 22
Fort Funston
*Easy Riding on the Sunset Trail: Enjoy a casual stroll along the Sunset trail to learn about native plants and sand dune ecology in the largest remaining remnant of the ancient dune field that once covered most of San Francisco from 1 to 2 p.m. This program accommodates wheelchair users. Meet a ranger at the head of the Sunset trail in the Fort Funston parking lot (556-8371).
Fort Point
*Buckets, Bullets, Brasa and a Banquette: Join a park ranger wearing an historic uniform describe the duties of a member of the guard at Fort Point and demonstrating the "load in nine" drill for a Springfield rifle-muaket from 3 to 3:30 p.m. Meet in the guard room just inside the fort.
Presidio
Coastal Defense Hike: A scenic three-mile hike from the Golden Gate Bridge to Baker Beach. Explore remnants of historic coastal defense batteries from the the 1870s through World War II, weather permitting, from 2 to 4 p.m. Meet the ranger at the Battery East parking lot above Fort Point along Lincoln Blvd.

MAY 27
Ocean Beach
*Beach Party Campfire: Join a ranger for an hour-long program to enjoy the beach, the waves and the night at 7:30 p.m. Bring warm sweaters and marshmallows. Meet the ranger on the beach at Lincoln Ave. and Great Highway.
MAY 28
Fort Point
*Pier Crabbing: Learn about equipment, bait, regulations and other important aspects of crabbing in the Bay, weather permitting, from 10 a.m. to noon. Dress warmly and meet the ranger at the Fort Point Fishing Pier with 50 cents bait fee (556-0865).
MAY 29
Fort Funston
*Hike to the Bank Swallows (See May 14)
Presidio
*Presidio Cemetery Walk: San Francisco's National Cemetery is the final resting place of many famous and interesting people: pre-Civil War soldiers, a Union spy, an Indian scout and 34 Medal of Honor recipients. Dress warmly for a walk from 10 to 11:30 a.m., meeting the guide, weather permitting, at the entrance gate along Lincoln Blvd at Sheridan Ave. (556-0865).

SFSU Downtown Center Doubles Enrollment

While San Francisco landlords are wringing their hands over vacant office space, S.F. State University's Downtown Center is doubling both the size of its campus and enrollment. After opening at 425 Market St. in February, 1993, the multi-million dollar self-supporting operation which accommodated 1,500 students doubled its enrollment to 3,000 with the addition of another floor in February.
"We can now handle up to 6,000 students and plan to do so within a year's time," explained SFSU Dean of Extended Education Peter Dewers. "This is big news for the taxpayer, because not one cent of state resources goes into the operation of this facility. Our entire facility is funded by the user, not the taxpayer; therefore, we are able to grow to meet the demand without budgetary restrictions."

Support for Parents with Special Children

華裔弱能家庭協會

當孩子有某種殘障，對家庭是個打擊，使人感到恐懼和無助，有殘障孩子的家庭，經常因孩子的特殊需要，政府提供的服務，或只由社會上的收視，如視障導盲，而不適宜。

作為一個「弱能服務機構」我們「家庭服務中心」提供多種服務，例如：互助小組，特約諮詢顧問，教育/專業人士教育小組，家長互助等。

我們這封信的目的是希望各位知道，我們是一個「社區服務家長」因為是我們的工作人員任何時候都可與你們商量有關孩子需要的需要，我們可提供有關此類家庭的取得各種特殊服務的資料。

請與我們聯絡，電話 282-7494 或 392-4453

鄭淑英的聯繫時間：每星期六下午2時至4時和我聯絡

Joyce Chang 蔣方舒

Learning your child has a disability can be both devastating and frightening for a family. Families living with a disabled child are often overwhelmed in providing for their child's special needs, the maze of bureaucracies and sometimes just the stigma.

As a neighborhood agency, Support for Families provides families with such services as support groups, short-term counseling, parent/professional educational workshops, parent-to-parent mentors and more.

As a community resource parent, I am available to talk with you about needs for families having disabilities. I am also available to provide information about special resources available to families.

Please feel free to contact me at 282-7494. Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Joyce Chang

Grapevine Crossword

ACROSS

1. Football score
3. Against
5. Cut
6. Residue
6. Oxygen
9. Poisoned condition
10. Style
12. Fiery
13. Anxious
15. Diminish
16. Undermine
17. Obligation
20. You can't believe everything you read in the
21. Outline
22. Asian country
24. Wren
25. Band
26. Tight end (ab)

DOWN

1. Cut
2. Stella
3. Eyeshade
4. Gash
7. Test solution (ab)
9. Chair
11. Enhance
14. Clen
15. Pontifical
16. Simlar
18. Vent
19. Risk
20. Italian river
22. Police department

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New Longer Summer Hours and Exciting Events Scheduled at the Exploratorium

San Francisco's popular museum of science, art and human perception, the Exploratorium, will be open seven days a week for the summer from Memorial Day, May 30 through Labor Day, September 5, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Wednesday evenings until 9:30 p.m. Admission ranges from \$4 to \$8, free to children under six; with no charge on the first Wednesday of every month.

For three months, from May 28 to September 5, the Exploratorium demonstrates the physical properties of sound and how they're perceived, manipulated and altered, while inviting all to come and enjoy the sheer pleasure of often offbeat and wonderful do-it-yourself sound and music making. Compose Yourself celebrates the unveiling of the museum's new Sound Section, with more than 40 original interactive exhibits on sound, hearing and music, developed by the Exploratorium under a major grant from the National Science Foundation.

With a generous contribution of \$20,000, First Republic Bancorp, Inc. of San Francisco has also ensured the continuation of the Exploratorium's Children's Educational Outreach Program (CEOP). As the exclusive corporate sponsor of this popular program, First Republic has helped bring hands-on science and art activities to young people in understanding neighborhoods, as well as sponsoring their field trips to the museum.

Now in its eighth year, CEOP takes table-top versions of Exploratorium exhibits and specially designed educa-

tional activities based on those exhibits to the children and teens where they live - in their own neighborhoods. Using a variety of hands-on materials and portable versions of Exploratorium exhibits, the emphasis is on doing science over time with common, everyday "stuff" that is accessible, inexpensive and easily obtainable.

Recyclable materials like cardboard tubes of different lengths cut from paper towel rolls have been easily adapted by kids into starting exhibits on sound and hearing; a single tube to look through and modify teaches surprising lessons on the persistence of vision in the eye.

CEOP employs a staff of ethnically and culturally diverse young men and women of high school and college age, providing role modeling that has proved extremely effective in reaching youngsters who have been underrepresented in the fields of science and math. In addition, the program brings children and teens to the Exploratorium for follow-up play and study, a program of field trips that many could not otherwise make on their own.

Task Force Meeting

Visitation Valley Task Force will hold a community meeting May 16, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at St. James Presbyterian Church, 240 Leland Ave. Valley residents are encouraged to get involved by attending an contributing ideas to a community plan.

May 1994

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 1:00pm VVCC Bingo	2	3	4 6:30pm Valleywide Parents' Council	5 11:00am VVCC Senior Council Meeting 7:00pm ROSES meeting	6 7:30pm Visitation Valley Asian Residents' Assn. 8:00pm Valley Baptist Youth Groups	7
8 Mother's Day 1:00pm VVCC Bingo	9	10 4:00pm VVCC Board Meeting 4:30pm Sewarddale Tenants Meet 7:00pm El Dorado N.B.C. Meeting	11 6:00pm Executive Park Advisory Committee-open to all	12	13 8:00pm Valley Baptist Youth Groups	14 VVCC Annual Meeting & Elections
15 1:00pm VVCC Bingo	16	17	18	19	20 8:00pm Valley Baptist Youth Groups	21 Armed Forces Day 10:00am Visitation Valley Arts Festival & Succot Fair
22 1:00pm VVCC Bingo	23	24	25	26 USDA Surplus Food Distribution Day at VVCC	27 3:00pm Visitation Valley Improvement Club 8:00pm Valley Baptist Youth Groups	28
29 1:00pm VVCC Bingo	30 Memorial Day (Observed)	31				

April

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June

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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Residential Hotel Manager Training Session

A free residential hotel management seminar conducted by the City Attorney's Code Enforcement Task Force will be held May 14, from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Centro de Pueblo, 474 Valencia St. on the second floor. Speakers will include experts and specialists in the fields of code enforcement and property management, as well as members of the neighborhood, landlord and tenant groups.

Those attending the session may receive a copy of the Task Force's new publication: Residential Hotel Management Manual - A Resource Guide for Property Managers.

This is the second training session conducted this year. The first was so well attended by residential hotel managers and tenants in the Tenderloin that the Task Force plans to conduct the session in other neighborhoods throughout the City.

"This unique educational effort is intended to help residential hotel managers with the important and difficult task of providing San Franciscans with safe and decent affordable housing," explained City Attorney Louise Renne. "Although education alone

will not eliminate substandard housing, it will go a long way, when coupled with vigorous prosecution of building code violators, towards raising the awareness level needed to eradicate slumlording."

For more information, call Deputy City Attorney Ilene Dick at 554-3920.

Friends of Library Hold Book Sale

Friends of San Francisco Public Library will hold their annual book sale at Fort Mason Center's Herbst Pavilion June 2 through 5 with select titles from more than 60,000 books at bargain prices.

Biggest in the West, the sale begins with a preview of rare books and a silent auction June 2, free to members of Friends or those joining that day for \$15. It continues free of charge Friday, June 3 and Saturday, June 4 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. On Sunday, June 5, all remaining books are half price from 10 a.m. to the 3 p.m. closing.

Proceeds from the sale fund free programs throughout the 27 branches of the S.F. Public Library system. Herbst Pavilion's entrance is at the foot of Buchanan St. opposite the Marina Safeway and is accessible by Muni 22, 28, 30, 42, 47, and 49 lines. Call 557-4257 for more information.

Grapevine Want-Ads

Private parties only. Up to 20 words for \$1. Extra lines 50 cents each. Mail ad with a check by 20th of month prior to issue date to Visitation Valley Grapevine, 50 Raymond Ave., San Francisco, CA 94134

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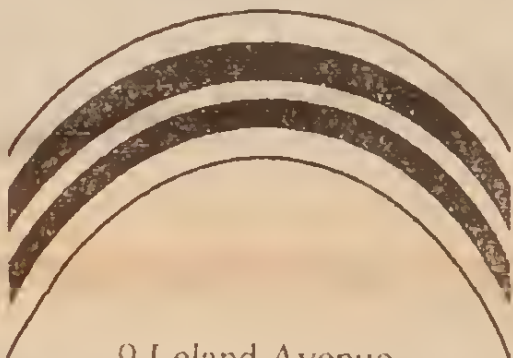


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Parks and Wildlife

From Page 3

alone, the Department of Finance has announced California needs to sell at least \$2.6 million in general obligation bonds over the next ten years.

CalPAW '94 is sponsored by many conservation groups, business organizations, labor unions, groups representing ethnic diversity, law enforcement agencies and many other segments of California society including the League of Women Voters of California. Some of the leading groups working for CalPAW '94 include: the Sierra Club, Planning and Conservation League, Audubon Society, Defenders of Wildlife, the Nature Conservancy and Friends of the River.

Natural disasters have hit Californians many times. Our first concern must be to respond to needs

of human safety, food and shelter and fixing the transportation system in Southern California. Governor Wilson has indicated that the freeway and road repairs underway in the South will be fully funded up to \$100 million from federal gas tax monies for the first 180 days; and that perhaps the State of California would not be required to pay for any part of that infrastructure repair.

Federal disaster relief figures, now exceeding more than \$8 billion, will benefit many of the private businesses and individuals affected by the earthquake. The greatest unmet need may be the restoration of lands and facilities owned by state, county and city governments. CalPAW '94 will help address part of that need!

Free Mother's Day Gift Wrapping at Tanforan

Tanforan Park Shopping Center will be offering free gift wrapping for Mother's Day gifts on Saturday and Sunday, April 30 and May 1, and again on Friday and Saturday, May 6 and 7, courtesy of the El Camino High School Band Boosters. They'll wrap any gift for Mom free of charge from noon to 7 p.m., and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Women and Cancer Walk in the Park

About 1,000 participants are expected to join in the third annual Women and Cancer Walk to be held Sunday, May 22 at 12:30 p.m. in Sharon Meadow of Golden Gate Park, an event coordinators anticipate will raise \$100,000 to benefit 11 Bay Area community-based health organizations serving women with cancer. For more information, call 487-6224.

S.F. Police Accepting Entry Applications

San Francisco Police Department will accept applications for entry level police officers May 21. Applicant must be a San Francisco resident, be at least 20 years old; have a high school diploma or GED; be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident; have a valid California driver's license; and have no felony convictions.

Starting salary is \$43,957 per year with an additional 6.25 percent night differential pay, along with generous medical and dental benefits. For more information, call the Recruitment and Retention Unit at 553-1999.

Folic Acid: New Findings Renew Old Debates

If all women of childbearing age consumed adequate amounts of the B vitamin folic acid, the incidence of life-threatening neural tube defects (NTDs) could be reduced 50 percent in this country, according to a report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Currently, the average American woman consumes one-half of the recommended amount of folic acid, reviving a familiar debate among nutritionists on the best way to obtain recommended vitamin levels.

Should women be encouraged to more carefully select folic-acid rich foods, or take a vitamin supplement with the recommended amount? Should the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allowed more foods to be fortified with folic acid?

NTDs, which include anencephaly and spina bifida, account for about five percent of all U.S. birth defects annually. Infants born with anencephaly are missing most or all of their brain and die shortly after birth. Most babies born with spina bifida, in which the spinal cord is exposed, grow to adulthood, but do so with severe paralysis or other disabilities.

According to CDC, a daily intake of 0.4 milligrams (mg) of folic acid potentially can eliminate one-half or all

NTDs. To achieve this reduction, however, all women of childbearing age are advised to consume recommended amounts of the vitamin, because the defects occur during the first month after conception - before many women realize they're pregnant. And more than one-half of U.S. pregnancies are unplanned.

Each day, the average American woman consumes about 0.2 mg of folate, the genetic term for food compounds with the biologic activity of folic acid.

To obtain recommended intakes of folic acid through diet requires careful selection of foods consistent with the U.S. Dietary Guidelines and the Food Guide Pyramid. Good sources of folate include leafy dark green vegetables, legumes, citrus fruits and juices, whole grains and peanuts. Some grain products such as breakfast cereals also are fortified with folacin.

But because many American women do not eat enough of these foods, CDC identified additional fortification of the food supply as one way in which to ensure an adequate intake of folic acid.

"We don't have the rickets in this country anymore because we fortified milk with Vitamin D," said Godfrey Oakley, M.D., director of CDC's Di-

vision of Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. "With fortification, people who need folic acid would get it without even thinking about it. Plus it's an extremely inexpensive way to obtain the nutrient."

Dietary supplements with folic acid are another potential means to achieve recommended intakes. Some 20 percent of American women currently take vitamins containing folic acid daily.

As with many other nutrients, there are also risks associated with consuming too much folic acid. Although the scientific evidence is limited, excessive folic acid can complicate the diagnosis of Vitamin B-12 deficiency, causing anemia and permanent nerve damage.

"The dose in which we see positive effects in reducing the risk of neural tube defects is uncomfortably close to the doses at which we begin to have safety concerns," said FDA Commissioner David Kessler, M.D. "FDA's mandate is to ensure that women of childbearing age get enough folic acid. But the agency must also do everything in its power to see that no one is exposed to excessive amounts of the nutrient."

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